

MINUTES
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF YORK

Adjourned Meeting
June 9, 2001

9:00 a.m.

Meeting Convened. An Adjourned Meeting of the York County Board of Supervisors was called to order at 9:13 a.m., Saturday, June 9, 2001, in the Resolution Room, Holiday Inn 1776, by Chairman James S. Burgett.

Attendance. The following members of the Board of Supervisors were present: Walter C. Zarembo, Donald E. Wiggins, James S. Burgett, and H. R. Ashe.

Sheila S. Noll was absent.

Also in attendance was James O. McReynolds, County Administrator.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS RETREAT

REVIEW OF CURRENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Mr. McReynolds asked the Board to first look at its Mission Statement and decide whether or not to continue in this format.

Discussion followed concerning the protection of individual property owners' rights and including appropriate wording in the mission statement. At this time the Board made no changes to the current statement.

Mr. J. Mark Carter, Planning and Zoning Manager, began a review of the current status of the Board's Goals and Objectives, indicating those areas that were basically completed and were shown as shaded areas on the handouts.

Mr. James Noel, Director of Economic Development, updated the Board on the status of Goal #1 and the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) initiation of a strategic plan.

Mr. McReynolds indicated the Board needed to have some discussion on what the emphasis should be before the strategic plan was published. He noted there were limited resources in both dollars and people, so the County needed to make sure the resources were placed in the proper places.

Mr. Noel stated that during the economic development briefing later in the meeting, he would review the issues and specific projects. He then updated the Board on the second part of Goal #1 dealing with the designation of a technology zone. He briefly explained the purpose of a technology zone and its benefits to York County and how to accomplish it.

Mr. Ashe asked Mr. Noel what he thought was the major impediment to getting an enterprise zone.

Mr. Noel explained that the state had capped the zones, and at the present time they were all gone except two pocket zones which the Governor controls. He explained the competitive process that took place several years ago when the County tried to get a zone. Through the years there have been a few opportunities to apply when the cap was raised, but York County has only applied once, and one was not awarded. Mr. Noel stated his best guess at the time was that the County was not in a good competitive position because of the absence of fiscal stress. He noted he was conservative at the time with making recommendations on what the County would provide as incentives, and the General Assembly has not established any new enterprise zones since then. All the County can do now is lobby the General Assembly to try and get them to establish more zones.

Discussion followed on qualifications for receiving an enterprise zone.

Mr. McReynolds noted that even if the County was able to compete again, he would not be optimistic because of the County's affluence.

Mr. Ashe suggested the Board might do well in the future to work the political side.

Mr. Noel stated his intent was to ask the Board to support asking the General Assembly in the County's next Legislative Program to increase the number of enterprise zones.

Mr. Ashe suggested that he be allowed to facilitate a meeting with the state staff to get their recommendations on what the County needs to do to improve its chance in getting an enterprise zone.

By consensus the Board agreed to allow Mr. Ashe to facilitate a meeting with state staff regarding criteria to meet in order to obtain an enterprise zone.

Mr. Noel then briefed the Board on the initiative for a comprehensive tourism development strategy for the County that meets the objectives of the County as well as the region.

Chairman Burgett stated he felt the Board needed to look at hiring a tourism director to actively promote tourism.

Mr. Ashe stated that with the County's contribution to the Williamsburg Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Board needs to make sure the County is getting equal representation.

Mr. Wiggins stated he felt the County was getting equal representation and is well represented. One of the things the members need to do as a Board is to attend their functions, meet with all of these people on a regular basis, and keep them ever mindful of York County. He stated he did not think there was a need for a person dedicated to tourism. Before the County considered doing that, he stated he felt the Board needed to get something in Yorktown to attract people to visit.

Chairman Burgett indicated he realized the County was not ready now for a tourism director, but it should be included in future planning.

Mr. Ashe stated he felt it should be a duty of the Economic Development Office to make sure the County is getting ample representation from the Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Mr. McReynolds stated that staff does monitor it very closely to make sure the County is getting good coverage for its dollars.

Mr. Ashe indicated that once Yorktown is revitalized and the tourist traffic is generated, then there will be a need for a tourism person.

Mr. Zaremba noted the whole Williamsburg area has grave concerns that the tourist industry will be off significantly this year. Hotels in York County as well as Williamsburg and James City County are happy to get 50 percent room occupancy. He noted the industry was really hurting.

Discussion followed on the slowing tourism economy.

Mr. Zaremba stated he felt all the goals' initiatives were very critical, and it was important to stay on track and keep to the timelines. He also indicated he felt the County needed to get more mileage out of the Convention and Visitors Bureau as well as get more of a regional effort started.

Mr. Wiggins reiterated the importance of getting to know the people of the Williamsburg Area Chamber of Commerce and the Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Mr. Ashe stated he felt the Board needed to be concerned, but the Convention and Visitors Bureau Board has taken some very big steps toward promoting the region.

Mr. Carter then reviewed Goal #2, its strategies and status.

Mr. Zaremba spoke of the citizens who come and speak before the Board during Citizens Comment period, and he stated he felt there was a need to develop some system of responding/answering their concerns/questions.

Mr. Carter then reviewed Goal #3, its strategies and status.

Mr. McReynolds indicated he planned to revamp the PEP process, stating he felt the employees needed to move toward performance management. He stated he was working with FMS to set up another round of training. A part of this training will be benchmarking with peers externally and identifying the trends internally. He stated this will help to objectively analyze whether or not the staff needs to be expanded or reduced.

Mr. Ashe indicated he felt staff needed to be looking at having a seminar a couple of times a year conducted by a nationally trained speaker who could talk about municipal government and customer service. All staff should have the opportunity to attend these sessions for update training. He also noted there could be dynamic returns on the cost of training. Mr. Ashe stated he would like to see a positive image and attitude that is immediate when someone comes in to talk to a county employee. They need to be looking to help without impacting on the citizen negatively. In terms of a developer, Mr. Ashe suggested that the developer be taken by the hand and led through the process from the beginning to the end. He noted that no matter how good the staff is, there is always room for improvement.

Chairman Burgett and Mr. Wiggins expressed their agreement with Mr. Ashe's suggestions.

Mr. Noel spoke concerning the current process followed by his office with businessmen and developers in the County. He suggested that plan review staff needed to look at an incoming plan finding ways to approve the plan rather than trying to find things wrong with it. He stated if the Board wished to amend this initiative, it should be in the development review process.

Mr. McReynolds stated he had discussions with John Hudgins who was working on a plan. He stated he wanted some mechanism to provide accountability for each department in meeting its deadlines. A system is needed whereby people know when they are supposed to get plans back; and when they don't, there should be a system notification to the County Administrator with the reason why. Mr. McReynolds spoke of the importance of clearly communicating with the development community as to what the process and deadlines are, and that the County staff is there to help them get their plans through and not throw roadblocks in their way.

Mr. Carter stated that one thing that has helped a great deal lately is the preapplication meeting. The applicants come in and sit down with staff and review the plans prior to submission. He stated if the developer does this, he is guaranteed a 21-day review return on his plans. If not, the review time could extend up to 60 days.

Mr. Zaremba stated there is a clearly defined written process, and perhaps what needs to be done is to review the process internally by the staff. He stated what he was hearing was that there was a possibility that the necessary manpower is not present to get the job done.

Mr. McReynolds stated he felt volume was a concern, and that was why another individual is being added to staff. He noted that some tightening up of internal accountability needs to be done also, as well as working on the general attitude of the staff.

Discussion followed on the 21-day plan approval system.

Meeting Recessed. At 10:47 a.m. Chairman Burgett declared a short recess.

Meeting Reconvened. At 11:00 a.m. the meeting was reconvened in open session by order of the Chair.

Mr. McReynolds stated he felt the last two goals were on track, and he recommended that the Board move on to the Economic Development item at this time.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Noel briefly reviewed the business retention and expansion program. Steve Cook works with this program on an everyday basis with the business community. He also reviewed the benchmarks and measures for evaluating whether or not economic development is heading in the right direction for the County. He then spoke concerning some investment opportunities to stimulate economic development activity, and he asked for the Board's feedback on the following proposals:

York River Commerce Park	Construct a new shell building
Busch Industrial Park	Construct a new shell building
C. A. Barrs Property	Construct a shell office building
International Center Business Park	Construct a shell office building

Keener-Cupp-Berrane property

Construct a new shell building

Mr. Ashe suggested that the plans be duplicated for the shell building to lower the architectural costs. He suggested that the architect design three different front elevations for variety, and this way costs will be cut for future shell buildings. He also suggested that the Board take a proactive stance and get in touch with the people in the economic development community.

Chairman Burgett stated he felt the Busch property will never have a problem filling up, and the shell building should be built at the York River Commerce Park.

Mr. Ashe, in speaking regarding the C. A. Barrs property, stated the Board needed to shift its focus to maximize private development. He stated he felt an office building on the Barrs property was the most viable option at this time.

Chairman Burgett asked where Mr. Barrs was making his money on this property.

Mr. Noel indicated he was only receiving funds from the sale of the land.

Mr. Zaremba asked how many vacant buildings did the County have on Route 17.

Mr. Noel stated there were two large facilities—the former Winn Dixie and the former Farm Fresh. Staff is working very hard with the owners of the Winn Dixie Center, but the market has shifted to office space. People don't want to reconfigure retail space.

Mr. Ashe stated he would like to see a briefing from staff on how the last six-year plan was presented. He noted that Jim Cleveland was telling him some things about the \$14 million that was supposed to be used for Route 17. He stated the County needs to get that money back, and he would like to get as much input as possible before he meets with Mr. Cleveland again.

YORKTOWN REVITALIZATION

Mr. Robert S. Kraus, Director of Yorktown Revitalization Projects, spoke on the goals of the Yorktown revitalization, including:

- Improvements west of the York River Bridge
- Water Street Revenue Sharing project
- Beach Trail Enhancement project
- Riverwalk connection to the Victory Center
- Construction of a small boat pier

He then spoke of the small boat pier, stating it was eligible for federal funding, it will reduce the cost of the Wharf Area pier, and it could help the Watermen's Museum. Mr. Kraus also stated it would enhance the Riverwalk project and provide a sheltered area for small boats.

Discussion followed on the impact to the Watermen's Museum due to construction of a new small boat pier and how the Museum could work in partnership with the County. By consensus the Board directed staff to work out a deal with the Watermen's Museum and bring back a proposal for the Board to consider.

Mr. Zaremba asked what the timeline would be for the project.

Mr. Kraus stated he saw it fully constructed within two years. With the grants the County has been able to secure, everything can be done, with the exception of the pier, from the bridge to the Victory Center within the next two years. He stated he would be working with the Watermen's Museum to develop a master plan for its property.

Mr. Kraus then outlined the Wharf project which will be done in three phases. Phase 1 will include moving and renovating the freight shed building and demolishing the old wharf. Phase 2 is to issue the RFP for commercial structures and conduct a parking analysis. Phase 3 includes building a new pier, building the commercial structures, and building the wharf area/plaza.

Mr. Ashe indicated some brainstorming needed to be done on the layout of the project, perhaps after the Nick's Restaurant property has been settled.

Mr. Kraus then reviewed the funding possibilities for the freight shed. Over \$1 million has been budgeted to relocate and renovate the shed. A private company has proposed to negotiate a contract for some private funding involving historic preservation tax credits, which would bring the County's funding portion down to \$200,000. He noted there was also a \$550,000 enhancement grant that was approved in 1999.

Discussion followed on the cost of moving and renovating the freight shed building.

Mr. Ashe asked if it was possible to work the wharf area plan so that the space at the top is where the concert area will be. He stated there was a need for ample parking to facilitate the patrons of the businesses that will be there. Mr. Ashe indicated his pleasure with the idea of two restaurants on the waterfront, but noted they should be viable 12 months out of the year.

Mr. McReynolds noted it would be up to what the private sector was willing to invest and under what conditions. Once that information is acquired, staff will have a parking analysis done for the village.

Mr. Wiggins stated the Board was not trying to provide parking for individuals who use the beach, and this should be a secondary concern. The Board's focus should be to provide people with something other than the beach to visit in Yorktown. If the people are willing to park at the beach and walk around Yorktown, they would probably also park at the top of the hill behind York Hall and walk down to the beach.

Mr. McReynolds indicated that close-in parking probably should be limited to less than one hour. He noted that Yorktown would have two different clientele—one in the off-season for the restaurants and shops and the other being tourists walking the area and spending a long time in the town. He stated the latter will be willing to use the trolley and walk the Riverwalk, but the first won't invest 30-40 minutes for the trolley when they just want to drop in a shop to pick up something or to visit a restaurant.

Mr. Zaremba noted he would like Mr. Kraus to move ahead with what he has presented at this time.

Mr. Ashe stated he felt there should be an analysis first to make sure all the Board members are comfortable with the plan.

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Mr. McReynolds recapped his understanding of the Board's direction to prepare an RFP for commercial space in short order and that a parking analysis be performed by a consultant.

By general consensus the Board directed that the advertising for an RFP and a parking analysis be accomplished.

Mr. Kraus then briefly reviewed other noteworthy topics including:

- A Master Plan for the Watermen's Museum
- Federal funding for National Park Service Projects
 - Poor Potters
 - Other projects on Park Service property
- Reorder the CIP to match anticipated funding stream

He indicated he would like to go beyond the Poor Potters project. He stated staff was negotiating for an easement over the Picnic Area to improve it. For this project, the County should be able to get some federal money. This area is the location that was suggested during the Master Plan planning for the concert area, and the National Park Service is receptive to this idea as long as it does not conflict with its everyday operations.

Mr. Ashe stated he felt there was a need for single piers inside the large pier to handle recreational and smaller boats.

Meeting Adjourned. At 1:37 p.m. Chairman Burgett declared the meeting adjourned to 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, June 12, 2001, in the East Room, York Hall, for the purpose of conducting a work session.

James O. McReynolds, Clerk
York County Board of Supervisors

James S. Burgett, Chairman
York County Board of Supervisors